

# Ascension of Our Lord



The task entrusted to pioneers is a difficult one. It requires of them a stout heart, an extraordinary spirit of sacrifice, and a greatness of soul. The rich heritage that was left to us, is evidence that the pioneers of our parish possessed and exhibited these qualities in great measure. In the span of fifty years, most of them have departed this life to receive God's reward for their labors. To them, and to those still living, we express our deep gratitude and appreciation for the legacy handed down to us, and promise to enrich and ennoble it in the years to come.

May those who are dead rest in eternal peace, and those still living enjoy for many more years the fruits of their labor.

## *Tribute to the Pioneers*

### ASCENSION OF OUR LORD EVANSTON, ILLINOIS



1912



1962

## *Hold Pionerom*

Praca pionerska jest trudnem zadaniem. Wymaga ona dzielnego serca, nadzwyczajnego ducha poświęcenia, i wielkoduszności. Bogate dziedzictwo, które otrzymaliśmy, świadczy że pionierzy naszej parafii posiadali i okazywali te cechy we wielkiej mierze. W przeciągu pięćdziesięciu lat, większość ich pożegnała się z tym światem, aby otrzymać Boską nagrodę za swe trudy i mokoły. Im i tym, którzy są jeszcze z nami, wyrażamy głębokie uczucia wdzięczności i poważania za dziedzictwo nam wręczone, i obiecujemy je dalej uwspaniać i uczyniać w przyszłości.

Niechaj ci, którzy już nas opuścili, spoczywają we wiekuistym pokoju, a ci, którzy są z nami, cieszą się długie lata z owoców swej pracy.



Most Holy Father

Rev. Vincent Nowakowski

humbly prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness  
begs Your

Apostolic Blessing  
for the

Priests, Sisters and members of the  
Ascension Parish

on the 50th Anniversary of its founding  
as a pledge of God's choicest graces unto life  
everlasting

*St. Dominus benignus precibus  
et orationibus. die 18 Junii 1962*

*A. St. Vincent*

*Archiep. Polonus*





*His Holiness Pope John xxiii*

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

*Chancery Office*

719 NORTH WABASH AVENUE  
CHICAGO 11, ILLINOIS

June 14, 1962

My dear Father Nowakowski:

I wish to extend to you, to your priests, Sisters and people my very best wishes and congratulations on the forthcoming Golden Jubilee of Ascension of Our Lord Parish. Through fifty years your parish has served the people of Polish origin very faithfully and has afforded them every opportunity for their spiritual exercises. It will be my pleasure to be present on this happy occasion and to join with you in celebrating this very joyous day.

Reassuring you of my best wishes and felicitations, I remain,

Very sincerely yours in Christ,

*+ Albert Cardinal Meyer*

Archbishop of Chicago

Reverend Vincent Nowakowski  
Ascension of Our Lord Rectory  
1534 Wilder Street  
Evanston, Illinois







ST. ANDREW'S RECTORY  
3548 NORTH PAULINA STREET  
CHICAGO 13, ILLINOIS

June 18, 1962

My dear Father Nowakowski:

It is a pleasure to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you, the priests, the sisters and the people of Ascension of Our Lord Church on this memorable occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Parish.

The many fine things accomplished throughout the past years are a tribute to the efforts and labors of all around you and an inspiration to everyone. It is my prayer that God will continue to shower His blessings on you for many more wonderful years.

With every good wish and kindest personal regards, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Bernard J. Sheil, D. D.  
Titular Archbishop of Selge

Reverend Vincent Nowakowski, Pastor  
Ascension of Our Lord Church  
1534 Wilder Street  
Evanston, Illinois

ST. MEL - HOLY GHOST RECTORY  
22 NORTH KILDARE AVENUE  
CHICAGO 24, ILLINOIS

June 22, 1962

Dear Father Nowakowski:

I wish to congratulate you and your people  
on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of your parish,  
and I will offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for  
your intentions.

With every blessing,

*+ Bishop Hillinger*

Most Reverend Raymond P. Hillinger  
Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago

Reverend Vincent Nowakowski  
Ascension of Our Lord Church  
1534 Wilder Street  
Evanston, Illinois







3834 North Spaulding Avenue  
Chicago 18, Illinois

June 14, 1962

Dear Father Nowakowski,

May I join with yourself, your assistants and parishioners and all associated in the prayerful commemoration you are making of the Golden Jubilee of your parish.

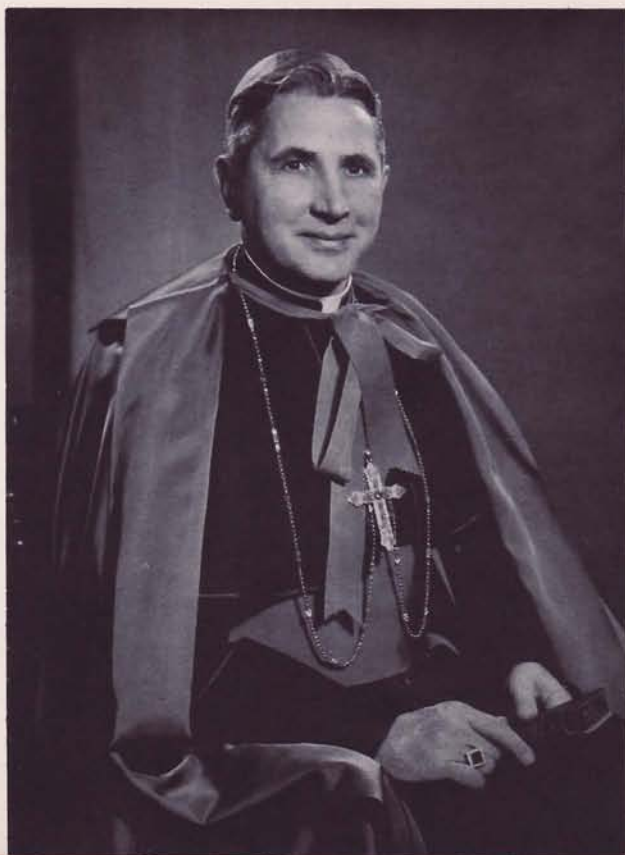
I am happy to be able to take a personal part in the Jubilee and want you further to know that I shall keep all of you in my prayers.

With every blessing I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Aloysius J. Wycislo*

Aloysius J. Wycislo  
Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago



ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO  
Chancery Office  
719 NORTH WABASH AVENUE  
CHICAGO 11, ILLINOIS

June 15, 1962

My dear Father Nowakowski:

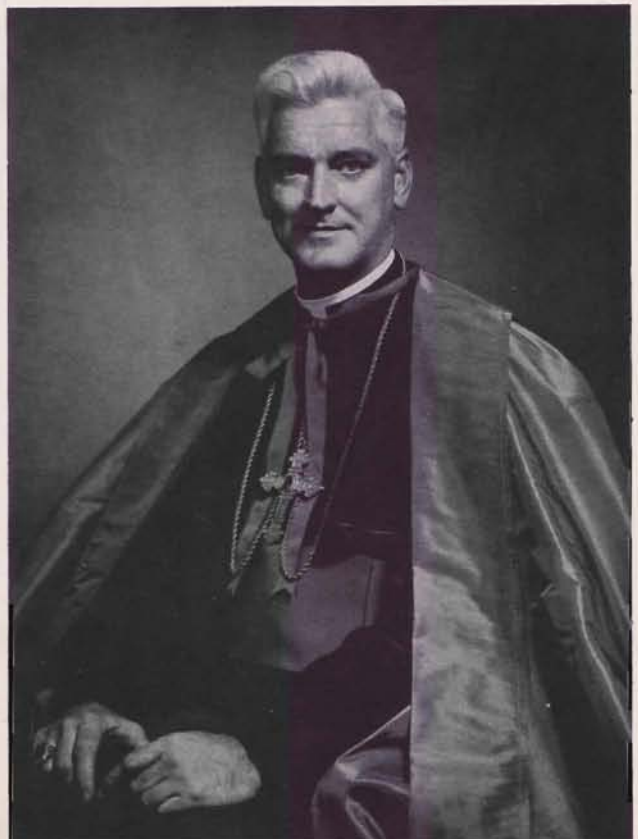
On Sunday, June 24, 1962 Ascension Parish will celebrate the Golden Jubilee of its founding. Through the past fifty years Ascension Parish has served its people well and has extended to them every opportunity and advantage to be close to Our Blessed Lord.

To you, and to your Reverend Assistant, to the Sisters and Parishioners I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes, and I pray that God will continue to bless you always.

Very sincerely yours in Christ,

*+ C. F. O'Donnell*  
Most Reverend Cletus F. O'Donnell  
Vicar General

Reverend Vincent Nowakowski  
Ascension of Our Lord Church  
1534 Wilder Street  
Evanston, Illinois





## OUR CHURCH



INTERIOR OF OUR CHURCH

Photographs of interior of the church -

Courtesy of:

Capt. Harry Schaefer

Evanston Fire Department





## AND ITS APPOINTMENTS

### IN FIFTY YEARS

1,788 BAPTISMS  
1,250 FIRST COMMUNIONS  
1,000 CONFIRMATIONS  
601 MARRIAGES  
404 BURIALS

MAIN ALTAR



BLESSED VIRGIN ALTAR



SACRED HEART  
ALTAR







OUR LADY OF FATIMA



A STATION OF THE CROSS



OUR LADY OF CZESTOCHOWA



A STAINED GLASS WINDOW

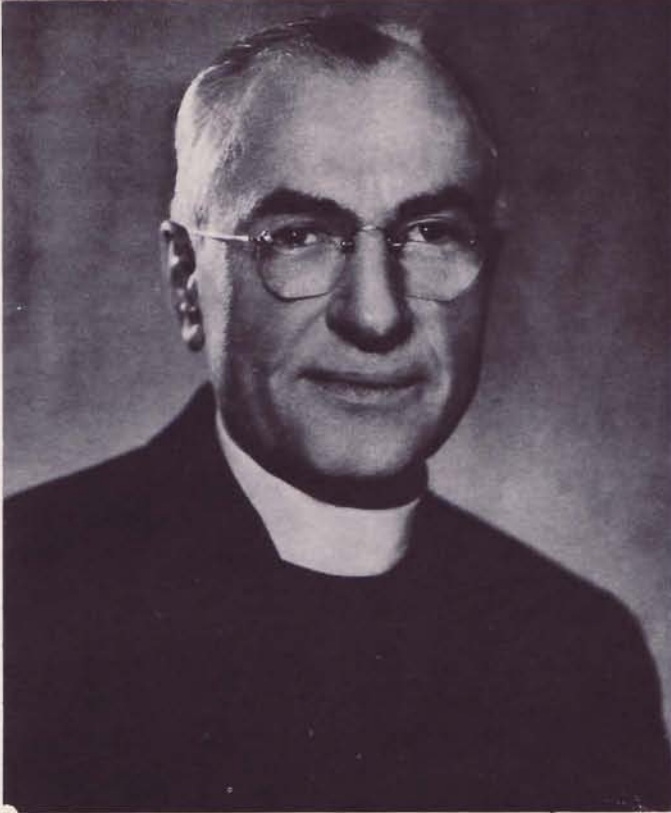


VESTIBULE OF CHURCH  
CHURCH—SCHOOL BUILDING



PARISH GARDEN (SITE OF PROPOSED NEW CHURCH)  
RECTORY



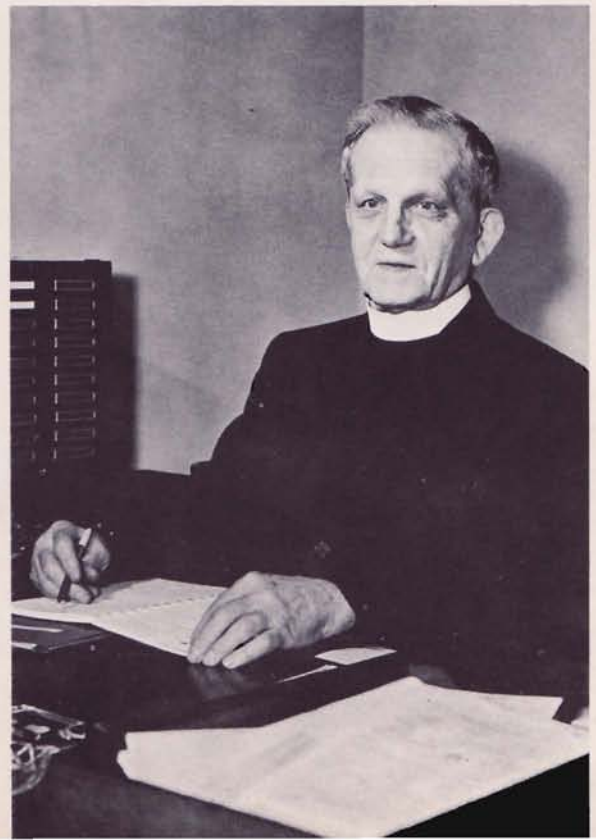


REV. VINCENT NOWAKOWSKI  
Present Pastor - 1956-



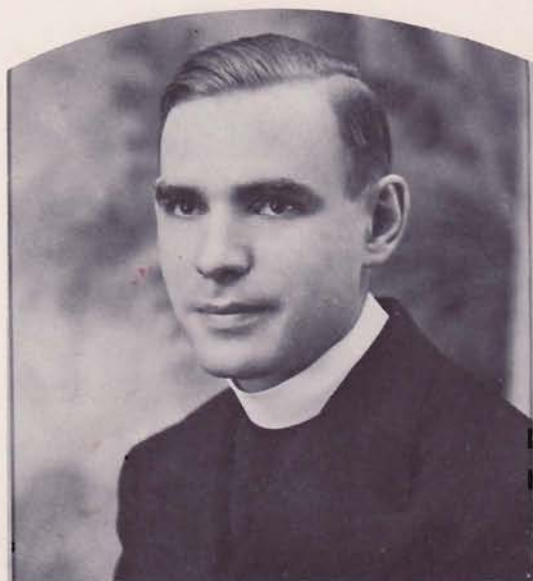
REV. STEPHEN S. GADOMSKI  
Present Assistant - 1960-

REV. JOHN V. HOFFMAN  
In Residence - 1953-





# *First Parishioner---* *Ordained a Priest*



REV. FIDELIS V. GRABOWSKI M.I.C.  
CLASS of 1931  
Ordained - May 22, 1945  
First Mass - May 27, 1945



## ASSISTANTS WHO SERVED AT ASCENSION OF OUR LORD PARISH

REV. FRANCIS C. CABANSKI -	(1939-1946)	REV. FRANCIS L. LEFKOWICZ -	(1950-1952)
REV. VINCENT SEKULSKI -	(1946)	REV. JOSEPH PRZYBYLOWICZ -	(1952-1953)
REV. GEORGE GORSKI -	(1946-1955)	REV. THEODORE B. PALUCH -	(1955-1960)
REV. STEPHEN S. GADOMSKI - (1960- )			



Among the Felician Sisters, who have taught at Ascension of Our Lord School - there were many, all fine teachers and dear to the hearts of the parishioners - the one who occupies a pre-eminent place in the hearts, affections and memories of all is -

## *Sister Mary Salome, C.S.S.F.*

She had spent over forty dedicated years of her life as a religious at Ascension of Our Lord parish. She had taught the children of the pioneers of the parish, their grandchildren, and even some of their great grand-children. In these years, by her great devotion to her vocation, her life of virtue, and her mother-like interest in her charges, she has gained the respect, friendship and love of all who came in contact with her.

It was with deep sorrow and regret that the parish saw her leave Ascension of Our Lord School, in 1961, for her present appointment at St. Michael's, in Wausau, Wisconsin. Their gain was our loss.

Ad Multos Annos, Sister Salome!

## *Former Parishioners---Now Felician Sisters*



**SISTER MARY CALASANTIA**  
Helen Rusek - 1930\*



**SISTER MARY LAETISSIMA**  
Bernice Smialek - 1935\*



**SISTER MARY ANDRIETTA**  
Mary Nowak - 1935\*



**SISTER MARY BONAVENTIA**  
Regina Hoffman - 1936\*



**SISTER MARY ALDONA**  
Helen Rychter - 1938\*



**SISTER MARY ASCENSIA**  
R.I.P.  
Helen Bieda - 1929\*



**SISTER MARY PRESENTINE**  
Mary Kuzma - 1942\*



**SISTER MARY LEOCRETIA**  
Jane Andrzejczak - 1943\*



**SISTER MARY ASCENSIA**  
Dorothy Bieda - 1945\*



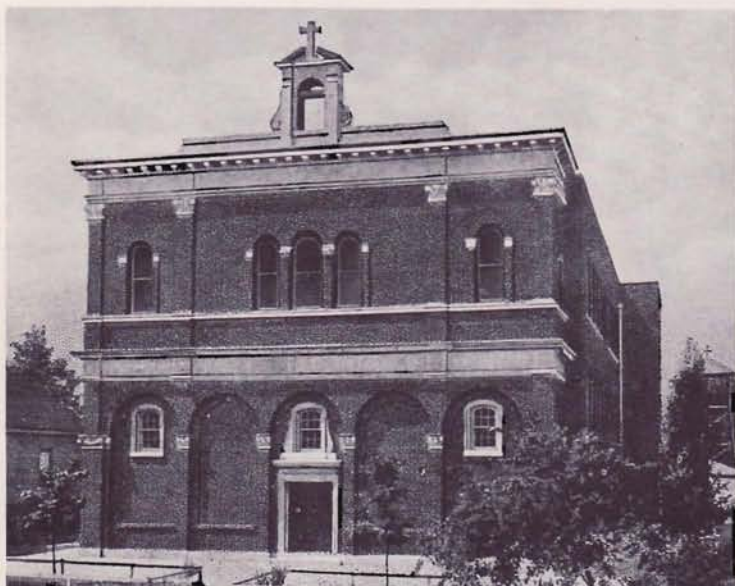
**SISTER MARY JANICE**  
Jacqueline Sobczynski - 1955\*

\*Date of Entrance into Convent

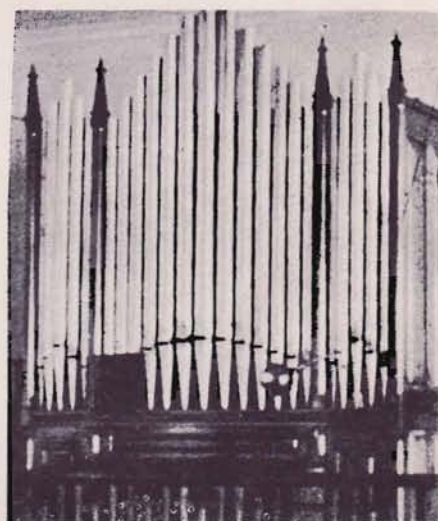




CHURCH PROPERTY (Shortly after Founding of Parish)



MAIN ALTAR DECORATED FOR FORTY HOUR DEVOTION



ORIGINAL ORGAN





REV. FELIX FELDHEIM  
First Pastor - 1912-1936

## 1912 - HISTORY - 1962

Ascension of Our Lord parish was founded fifty years ago by a handful of immigrants, who a few years before had come to America from the north-western part of Poland. Most of them were farm folk and villagers. They were poor in material resources, but rich in their religious faith and in the culture and heritage, which they brought with them from their homeland. Having come from an enslaved and oppressed nation, where they witnessed many an armed uprising for the cause of freedom, they knew well the value of freedom and the price that had to be paid for it. Leaving their homeland, and everything near and dear to them, they migrated to the States in search of it. Most of them came directly or indirectly to the great mid-western city of Chicago, where so many of their fellow countrymen had settled. In time, they found their way into the northern suburb of Evanston, where employment, more suitable to their temperament and abilities, was in greater abundance. They settled on the west side of town, not too far from the industrial district, where many of them found employment. In succeeding years, others from the same part of Poland, encouraged by the success of their friends, also came and settled in the neighborhood. The result of this was the eventual colonization of the west side of Evanston.

Since these early immigrants came from a predominantly Catholic country, they brought with themselves their traditional Catholic faith. Hence,

their first concern was to find a suitable place of worship, where they could conveniently fulfill their religious obligations. They were too few in number to have a church of their own, and so most of them enrolled at St. Nicholas Church on Ridge Avenue. Their lack of familiarity with the English language, however, made it impossible for them to participate fully in church services and devotions. The pastor of St. Nicholas, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Peter Biermann soon realized this, and appreciated their plight. He proved himself to be their true friend and real benefactor, by arranging to have special services conducted for them in the Polish language. Occasionally on Sunday a priest, who spoke Polish, came from the Fathers of the Divine Word in Techny, Illinois, to conduct their devotions, to preach to them in their native tongue, and to hear their confessions. In 1911, this small group of Catholics became a mission to the parish of Transfiguration in Bowmanville. The pastor of this parish, the Rev. Francis Wojciechowski, journeyed every other Sunday to Evanston to minister to the spiritual needs of his small congregation. This situation prevailed for a whole year.

During this year the Polish population on the west side of Evanston increased appreciably, so much so, that a committee was formed, and an appeal was made to the Archbishop of Chicago for a new parish. The Archbishop honored their petition, and on June 12, 1912, the west side mission in





FIRST ALL MALE CHOIR

**Top row:** Jozef Chrust, Stan Zajackowski, Jozef Jozwik, Michael Kuchowicz, Stan Kendziora, Bol Turski.  
**Center row:** Jan Broniarczyk, Antoni Frankowski, Marcin Szczepaniak, Fabiszak, Frank Kuchowicz, Marian Fabiszak.  
**Bottom row:** Marcin Szczepaniak, Jozef Kwasniewski, Adam Rokocinski, Father Felix Feldheim and Mr. Malinowski, first organist and choir master.



FATHER FELDHEIM RECEIVES THE CROSS OF MERIT, "POLONIA RESTITUTA"; FROM IGNACE PADEREWSKI



FIRST MIXED CHOIR



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Evanston was raised to the status of a parish. The Rev. Felix Feldheim, previously pastor of St. Stanislaus in Kankakee, Illinois, was appointed the founding pastor of the new parish of the Ascension of Our Lord. Aided in his work by a very active parish committee, the energetic and devoted young pastor immediately began the enormous task of soliciting funds necessary for the construction of the required parish buildings. After sufficient funds had been gathered, a site was chosen, on Wilder Street, between Ashland and Florence Avenues, the land was bought, and construction began. A few months later the combination Church and school building was completed, with many of the parishioners donating much of their time and labor. The first Mass in the new church was said on the 9th of February, 1913, and on June 8th of the same year, the new church-school building was solemnly blessed by the Most Reverend Paul Rhode, auxiliary Bishop of Chicago. Soon after, the parish rectory was also built. The total cost of the new church properties and appointments was \$52,500. In September of 1913 the parish school was officially opened, and was staffed by the Felician Sisters. Three years later two large bells were purchased, blessed, and installed in a belfry to summon the faithful to church services.

As the years went by, the Polish population of Evanston increased, and the people themselves prospered. And so also did the parish. With its growth came the need for religious, fraternal, and

cultural organizations. As the need arose, these came into being—the Holy Name and St. Joseph Societies, The Rosary Womens' Sodality and St. Ann's Club, The Young Ladies Rosary Sodality, the Choir, Dramatic Circle, local groups and chapters of the Polish National Alliance, of the Polish Roman Catholic Union, of the Polish Women's Alliance, a Civic Club, the Polish American Club. The people took a more and more active part in the affairs of their community and city. They and their children began to learn and understand the English language, which once was so difficult for them. The language barrier was slowly being removed. With the help and encouragement of their pastor most of the immigrants became citizens of this their adopted land. In the first World War 102 young men of Ascension parish served in the armed forces, and fought overseas in defense of the freedom that they and their families enjoyed in America. With the passage of years, the Polish immigrants and their children became an integral part of the life of Evanston, manifesting their talents and abilities in business, in politics, and in civic affairs. The parish and its people enjoyed a high degree of prosperity during the 1920's. Under the direction of Father Feldheim a Savings and Loan association was organized at the parish. Through its services, many of the parishioners were able to buy their own homes, which many own to the present day. The parish itself was able to pay off a good part of its debt.



## FATHER FELDHEIM'S SILVER JUBILEE OF ORDINATION

